

by Mora Jameson From The Getzen Company

Mora Jameson: Well, Michael, how did you get started in music?

Michael Drake: I haven't really started yet... I sorta look at it that way 'cause of the old line that I love, "The more you learn the more you learn how little you know." In 4th grade, a schoolmate brought a cornet for show and tell, and I do believe it was a Getzen. I was enthralled by the sound of that horn...I was hooked from that point on. After my show of interest, my dad bought me a bugle and I played on that for a while, until I guess I got my lip to figure out how to make the different sounds. Well, I do not have that bugle anymore, I am sorry to say, but he then bought me a cornet for \$5.00. I still have that horn. The bell is missing, but it is really a wonderful piece of memories for me...

MJ: Did you come from a musical family?

MD: Both of my parents were musicians and they attended music school. My father got a degree, played sax and clarinet and sang tenor. My mother played piano and the two of them did some part time gigs to help themselves through college. Of the 5 kids, including myself, my two sisters are quite musical as well. Sister Wendy lives in Florida and at one time was recording children's religious music. Sister Jody lives in Nashville and does some country singing on the side. She has a wonderful voice. As a family, we used to all sing. My two brothers just sing and have a good time.

MJ: Is there any particular teacher that stands out in helping build your abilities?

MD: When the family lived in Cape May New Jersey, I took lessons from a man named Ed Bischoff, a wonderful player. The thing that impressed me was that for starters he wrote out all the exercises that I was to play in a book.....it was very cool. The most motivating aspect to Mr. Bischoff was that he lived in a small trailer and he was physically handicapped and permanently in a wheelchair. In addition, he was missing his index finger and thumb on his right hand, so he played the valves with the last three fingers of his right hand. I figured if this guy could do what he did on that horn, I will never make excuses.

MJ: What advice do you have for aspiring young trumpeters?

MD: In addition to “the more you learn the more you learn how little you know” and “I will never make excuses..... NEVER and I repeat NEVER watch the clock when your practicing..... you’re done practicing when you’re done.....

MJ: I know many readers will be interested in this... Do you have a regimented warm up and practice routine? If so, what works for you? How much do you practice each day?

MD: In the perfect world I would love to say that I have a regimented warm-up and practice routine. Some days are more perfect than others. I do gravitate towards a variety of exercises... hard and soft blowing, breath attacks, flexibilities, some mind/finger dexterity things, and a little hatha yoga.

MJ: Which Getzen horn or horns do you play?

MD: Getzen Renaissance Large bore (20S-LB trumpet).

MJ: What do you like about this horn?

MD: I have complete confidence in the consistency from one Renaissance to another. This is v e r y important. This tells me that the horn was built with a certain attitude in mind. In other words... they didn’t just get lucky with the way my particular Renaissance plays. It is truly “one of a kind” that is virtually CLONED..... The craftsmanship allows me to always feel the horn is never in my way and responds directly from my needs and is truly an extension of my energies.....craft....and creativity.....

MJ: Any special mouthpiece or theory on mouthpieces?

MD: I Have been playing the same mouthpiece for 30 years. My advice is to find one, work into it and stick with it.

MJ: What styles of music do you enjoy playing the most?

MD: On any given day or part of a day it can range from classical to jazz to Dixieland, depending on my mood.

MJ: Michael, tell me about the “No Tan Lines Band.”

MD: Well, I generally go by Michael Drake and then, because of the implied entertainment value, I go by the “No Tan Lines Band” when I am doing festivals, bars, etc.

MJ: Did you go to school for music?

MD: Yes, I went to the University of Tulsa during 1970 and 1971. Then I went to the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee from 1971 through 1972.

MJ: What trumpet players did you listen to as you grew up? ...and which had the biggest impact/influence on you?

MD: I listened to quite a variety of players including Al Hirt, Dizzy Gillespie, Herb Alpert, Miles, and many, many more.

MJ: Do you have any special projects in the works right now?

MD: I am in the process of recording my 7th CD. Never Too Late is a proposed title for it. The orchestration will be full big band arrangements and more of my original tunes.... I have 3 more CD's worth of music in the oven ready to produce.

MJ: Anything else you can think to add for our readers?

MD: Being a band leader and running a business as a self-employed person definitely has its advantages... my work is my hobby. I feel very fortunate to be able to do what I do and make a living. One has to learn how to wear many hats in this business.

MJ: Thanks, Michael, and all the best on your upcoming CD, Never Too Late.

Visit www.drakemusic.com to order Michael Drake's CDs. [Contact us](#) to receive a new poster celebrating the release of his latest CD, *It's Nice in Paradise* (recorded on the Getzen Renaissance 20S-LB trumpet).